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# USDA ORGANIZER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Agriculture Local #2, UFWA

November 1938

## CIVIL SERVICE CONFERENCE HEARS UNIONS PRAISED

The place of union organization in the government service was a subject of discussion at the annual Civil Service Assembly of the United States and Canada held in Washington, October 17 to 21.

Murray Latimer, Chairman of the Railroad Retirement Board, praised the unions for their activities in behalf of Government employees and stressed their function in instilling "a democratic spirit in the civil service." He pointed out that the unions in the government express a healthy point of view gained from their knowledge of the problems of workers as a whole, and thus provide one of the best safeguards against the growth of a bureaucracy which regards itself as a class apart.

Mr. Latimer explained to the Civil Service body that, contrary to popular belief, the public service worker does not have the same degree of social security as is enjoyed by many workers in private industry. Federal workers who are in the 70-year retirement group have, due to uncertainty of tenure, only 24 chances in 100 of receiving retirement pensions in their old age.

At the Thursday afternoon session of the conference, Roy F. Hendrickson, Director of Personnel in the Department of Agriculture, spoke on the subject of "Handling Employee Grievances in Federal Agencies." He described the procedure used in Agriculture of which both he and we are justly proud.

The next regular meeting of  
Agriculture Local 2, UFWA,  
will be held on  
Wednesday, November 16, 8 pm  
532-17th St. nw

Everyone interested is welcome

## U.S.D.A. ORGANIZER

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## JOB CLASSIFICATION

Workers in the Government service frequently ask questions concerning their job classifications. Types of work assignments change from time to time and these changes may bring about increased responsibilities or a greater scope for individual initiative. It is not usually a simple matter to determine the precise point at which a worker's job has passed from one classification to another and feelings of dissatisfaction naturally occur among employees who are impatient at delays in reclassification.

Sometimes the failure of employees to secure prompt consideration of their classification problems may be traced to administrative inertia--a slowness on the part of division and bureau heads to recognize changes warranting reclassification until long after they have occurred. This tendency is fostered by a desire to meet budget requirements and still produce a maximum

of service to the public.

Sometimes failure to achieve reclassification is due to the understaffing of the Civil Service Commission which causes inadequate consideration to be given to job classifications. Long delays may occur between the time a reclassification request is made by an employee and the time when an investigator is sent out by the Commission.

These considerations should not, however, blind us to the employee's own responsibility in the matter. The employee who feels that his job classification is no longer suited to the type of work he is doing, should not sit back and grumble about the unfairness of the situation. He should avail himself of the services of the Adjustment Committee of the U.F.W.A. and in this way receive immediate consideration of his problem. If there is merit in the case, this committee can be most effective in securing an adjustment.

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## LABOR LAUGHS

"I like Mr. Macfadden's editorials each week on the New Deal. It is our plan to put them on our bulletin boards for the workers."--A. Lee Marcum, Vice-president, Shannon Spring Bed Co. in a letter to Liberty Magazine.

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## ON THE LABOR FRONT

The prospects for the formation of a national fisherman's union advanced a step with a vote of the Alaska Fishermen's Union to affiliate with the CIO.

Contracts signed by the Great Lakes Division of the National Maritime Union with the Cleveland Tanker Corp. and the American Petroleum Transport Corp. set a new high wage scale for tanker seamen and provided for preferential hiring of union members.

By agreement with the United Grocery Workers Union in Chicago, after charges had been filed with the NLRB, the National Tea Company consented to reinstate 149 unfairly discharged men and pay \$50,000 back wages.

The Cooperative League of the U.S.A. in congress at Kansas City wrote into its statement of policy recognition of labor's right to bargain collectively.

An intermediate report of an NLRB trial examiner recommended dissolution of Western Union's company union and repayment to employees of a half million dollars deducted as "union" dues since the enactment of the Wagner Act. Mervyn Rathbone, president of CIO's American Communications Association, hailed the report as the "death knell of the old company union in the country."

## WANTED: A NEW NAME

We feel that we have outgrown our name, "ORGANIZER," and would like a new name in its place.

We are offering as a prize for the best suggestion a choice of Modern Age Books. We should be inclined to favor suggestions which embodied as many of the following virtues as possible:

(1) Brevity; (2) an agricultural flavor; and (3) a connotation of constructive cooperative effort by employees.

(Send your choice to Room 3630 Co. Bldg. % J. A. Schricker)

## THE PRESIDENT CRACKS DOWN

The antics of the Dies Committee which under the guise of investigating un-American activities has managed to attack almost everything progressive and decent in American life, including trade unionism, proved too much for President Roosevelt last week. Commenting on the committee's attack on Governor Murphy (for his refusal to use troops against automobile workers,) the President said:

"Most fair-minded Americans hope that the committee will abandon the practice of merely providing a forum to those who for political purposes, or otherwise, seek headlines which they could not otherwise obtain."

Join the UFWA

## PRESIDENT'S ORDERS IMPROVE PERSONNEL PRACTICE

(No.4 of series on Executive Orders of June 24, 1938.)

A fourth improvement in the Civil Service indicated by the Executive Orders is in the sphere of personnel administration. The President's Orders call for the establishment of separate personnel divisions headed by qualified directors of personnel in every agency where they do not already exist.

The duties of personnel directors are to include; supervision of appointments, establishment of machinery for adjusting employee grievances, control of efficiency ratings, and the initiation of training facilities for employees.

These directors of personnel in the various agencies will, under the Orders, comprise a Council of Personnel Administration which will recommend improvement and coordinate personnel administration. Representatives of the Civil Service Commission and of the Budget Bureau will also be members of the Council.

The Union welcomes this reform, knowing that specially trained personnel administrators have a better understanding of employee problems and are more intelligently appreciative of the function of the union in representing employees. Agriculture in this respect has been one jump ahead of many other agencies because it had for the most part already met the President's requirements.

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### INTER-UNION COUNCIL

The Inter-Union Council took a deep breath after presenting the employee view on the filling of vacancies and is now tackling the enormous problem of advancement within grade. The Council hopes that the more or less rough criteria now used in granting administrative promotions may be reduced to principles which are equitable, easily understood, and possible of universal application throughout the Department.

#### MEMBERSHIP BLANK

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ROOM \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

Fill out and send by chain envelope to John A. Schricker, Room 3630 South Building.